

Categorical Exclusion Documentation Format for Actions Other Than Hazardous Fuels and Fire Rehabilitation Actions

Chloride –Area AML Backfills DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2012-0035-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Kingman Field Office

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: N/A

Proposed Action Title/Type: Chloride-Area AML Backfills

Locations of Proposed Action: Up to 152 abandoned mines located on public lands in T. 22 N., R. 18 W.; T. 23 N., R. 18 W., T. 24 N., R. 18 W. and T. 18 N., R. 15 W., G. & S. R. M., near Chloride, Mohave County, Arizona. See attached maps.

Description of Proposed Action: BLM would backfill abandoned mine shafts on public land in the vicinity of Chloride, Arizona. These abandoned mine workings have been surveyed by Arizona Game and Fish Department wildlife biologists, who recommended that they be permanently closed because of their lack of value as bat habitat. Backfilling these dangerous abandoned mine workings will prevent accidental falls and contamination of soil and groundwater by dumping of hazardous materials. All mining claimants with claims in the area have been notified of this work. No objections to the closures were received by BLM, Kingman Field Office. If owls are found in any workings, they will be expelled with smoke bombs or flares before backfilling.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan (LUP) Name: Kingman Resource Area Resource Management Plan and Final EIS

Date Approved: March, 1995

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): N/A

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions):

“Hazardous Materials Management

The objective is to reduce hazards to the public and natural resources on public lands from toxic materials.”

C: Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, Appendix 4, J (8) – Installation of minor devices to protect human life, (e.g., grates across mines), and, Appendix 4, J (10) -- Removal of structures and materials of no historical value, such as abandoned automobiles, fences, and buildings, including those built in trespass and reclamation of the site when little or no surface disturbance is involved.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM2 apply.

I considered the following when reviewing the proposed project:

- Backfilling abandoned mine workings will have a positive effect on public health & safety. Accidental injury or death due to falls into the openings will be eliminated. Contamination of soil and groundwater by the dumping of hazardous materials into abandoned mine shafts will be prevented.
- Mining claimants have been notified of the proposed backfills, and no objections were made.
- Disturbance will be limited to the minimum necessary to backfill the holes. Material for backfilling will come from waste rock dumps only.
- Cultural clearances have been completed for the sites. No historic features would be impacted by the proposed backfilling. Standard stipulations apply.
- No T&E habitat or species are present in this area, and there is no significant bat habitat in the shafts to be backfilled, according to wildlife surveys completed by biologists from the Arizona Game & Fish Dept. (AZGFD), who recommended that all sites could be backfilled without first installing wildlife exclusions.

D: Signature

Authorizing Official: / s / Ruben A. Sanchez Date: May 9, 2012
(Signature)

Name: Ruben A. Sanchez

Title: Field Manager, Kingman Field Office

Approval and Decision

Review: We have determined that the proposal is in accordance with the categorical exclusion criteria and that it would not involve any significant environmental effects. Therefore, it is categorically excluded from further environmental review.

Prepared by: / s / Paul L. Misiaszek **Date:** _____

Paul Misiaszek
Geologist

Reviewed by: / s / Don McClure **Date:** _____

Ramone McCoy
NEPA Coordinator

Reviewed by: / s / Ruben A. Sanchez **Date:** 5/9/2012

Ruben A. Sanchez
Field Manager

Project Description: BLM would backfill abandoned mine workings located on public land in T. 22 N., R. 18 W.; T. 23 N., R. 18 W.; T. 24 N., R. 18 W., near Chloride, Arizona. BLM would use a backhoe or bulldozer to push material from the waste rock dumps next to the features into the holes. Backfilling these abandoned mine workings would significantly improve public safety, as the physical safety hazards would be permanently eliminated. It would prevent the dumping of hazardous materials into the holes, protecting soil and groundwater from contamination. Cultural and biological surveys have been completed. Arizona Game and Fish Department surveys show that these abandoned mine workings provide minimal or no habitat for bats. Some workings will be cleared of bats before backfilling. If owls are found in any mine workings, they will be expelled with smoke bombs or flares before backfilling.

Decision: Based on a review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. It is my decision to approve the action as proposed.

Approved By: / s / Ruben A. Sanchez **Date:** 5/9/2012

Ruben A. Sanchez
Field Manager